



**2023 SESSION
POSITION PAPER**

BILL: HB 1146 – Maryland Department of Health and Maryland Health Care Commission – Dental Services – Survey and Regional Needs Assessment

COMMITTEE: Senate Finance Committee

POSITION: Letter of Support With Amendments

BILL ANALYSIS: Requires the Maryland Department of Health to conduct a survey of hospitals to identify the availability of hospital operating resources for dentist use and requires the Department and the Health Care Commission to develop regional plans to ensure the availability of certain operating space for the performance of certain dental procedures.

POSITION RATIONALE: The Maryland Association of County Health Officers (MACHO) is in support of HB 1146 *with* the below listed amendments. In some areas of Maryland, access to dental procedures that require general anesthesia is insufficient to meet residents’ needs. This is particularly problematic for children covered by Maryland Medicaid, for adults with special needs, and in rural areas. Public health officials applaud the attention that HB 1146 gives to this problem, but the bill fails to specifically address the needs of vulnerable groups, including children who are covered under Medicaid. Due to several factors, Medicaid recipients are disproportionately blocked from access to critical dental services that can only be safely provided outside of standard dental offices. To better assure that every child and adult with special needs has access to safe and appropriate dental services, MACHO respectfully suggests the following amendments for consideration:

We recommend adding to Page 3, Line 22 following “Hospital Association”:

“AND THE MARYLAND STATE DENTAL ASSOCIATION”

We recommend adding to Page 3, Line 22 following “a survey of hospitals”:

“AND DENTISTS”

We recommend adding to Section A:

(a)(6) THE PERCENTAGE OF DENTAL PATIENTS TREATED IN OPERATING ROOMS COVERED BY MARYLAND MEDICAID.

We recommend adding to Page 4, Line 2 following “Maryland Hospital Association”:

“AND THE MARYLAND STATE DENTAL ASSOCIATION”

We recommend adding to Section B:

(b)(5) ADEQUACY OF OPERATING ROOM AND AMBULATORY SURGERY CENTER ACCESS FOR MARYLAND MEDICAID RECIPIENTS IN NEED OF DENTAL CARE, PARTICULARLY FOR CHILDREN AND RURAL RESIDENTS.

We recommend adding to Page 4, Line 13 following “Maryland Hospital Association”:

“AND THE MARYLAND STATE DENTAL ASSOCIATION”

These amendments to the House Bill would improve access to dental care, particularly for underserved children and high-risk adults with high acuity healthcare needs. For these reasons, the Maryland Association of County Health Officers submits this letter of support with amendments for HB 1146. For more information, please contact Ruth Maiorana, MACHO Executive Director at рмаiorа1@jhu.edu or 410-937-1433.